

Article - Local Government

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§13–119.

(a) (1) In Charles County, on or before July 1 of each year, a person owning or keeping a dog shall apply to the county tax collector for a license for the dog if the dog is at least 6 months old.

(2) At the time of application, the applicant shall pay the fee for a dog or kennel license set by the County Commissioners of Charles County.

(3) Except as provided in § 13–108 of this subtitle, the licenses and fees required under this section are the only licenses and fees required for owning or keeping a dog.

(4) The county commissioners shall prepare and supply the form for a license issued under this subsection.

(5) A dog license shall contain the date of issuance, a serial number, and a description of the dog licensed.

(6) A license expires on July 1 of the year after issuance.

(b) (1) In Charles County, the county tax collector shall issue a tag with each dog license to a person owning or keeping a dog when the person pays the license fee for the dog.

(2) The County Commissioners of Charles County shall prepare and supply tags to the county tax collector each year.

(3) The tags shall be:

(i) composed of metal;

(ii) imprinted with a serial number corresponding to the number on the license issued to the owner under subsection (a) of this section;

(iii) imprinted with the calendar year for which the tag is issued;

(iv) 1 inch or less in length; and

- (v) equipped with a substantial metal fastener.
- (4) The county commissioners shall change the general shape of the tags each year.
- (5) Tags supplied to owners of kennels shall contain the word “kennel”.
- (6) The person owning or keeping a dog shall attach the tag to a substantial collar and keep the collar and tag on the dog for which the license was issued at all times, except when the dog is:
 - (i) confined in a kennel; or
 - (ii) hunting under the charge of an attendant.
- (7) The county tax collector shall replace a lost tag on:
 - (i) application by the person to whom the original license was issued;
 - (ii) the production of the license; and
 - (iii) payment of a fee of 25 cents.
- (c) (1) If reasonably applicable, this subsection applies to the regulation and control of:
 - (i) any domestic animal; and
 - (ii) a wild animal kept in captivity.
- (2) The County Commissioners of Charles County may pass rules, regulations, or resolutions to provide for:
 - (i) issuing dog licenses;
 - (ii) keeping records of all sales of licenses;
 - (iii) designating persons authorized to sell licenses; and
 - (iv) seizing and disposing of dogs found running at large in the county.

(3) Before the county commissioners pass a rule, regulation, or resolution in accordance with this subsection, the proposed rule, regulation, or resolution shall be advertised in a newspaper of general circulation in the county once each week for 4 successive weeks, to provide any person an opportunity to be heard.

(4) The rules, regulations, or resolutions shall include standards and shall operate uniformly.

(5) Subject to paragraph (6) of this subsection, the county commissioners may delegate, by written contract, the enforcement of the rules, regulations, or resolutions.

(6) (i) The county commissioners shall reserve the right to cancel a written contract executed in accordance with paragraph (5) of this subsection.

(ii) A cancellation under this paragraph:

1. may be without notice or recourse, if the cancellation is for cause; or

2. requires notice at least 30 days before cancellation, if the cancellation is without cause.

(7) (i) The county commissioners may establish penalties for a violation of a rule, regulation, or resolution passed under this subsection.

(ii) The penalty established under this paragraph for each violation may not exceed imprisonment for 1 year or a fine of \$1,000 or both.

(d) (1) The County Commissioners of Charles County may appoint animal control officers.

(2) An animal control officer appointed under this subsection:

(i) has all the powers of a peace officer;

(ii) may sell and issue dog licenses; and

(iii) may seize and dispose of stray, injured, or sick dogs in accordance with a rule, regulation, or resolution passed in accordance with subsection (c) of this section.

(3) The county commissioners may provide for the compensation of an animal control officer appointed under this subsection.

(e) (1) (i) The County Commissioners of Charles County may establish an animal shelter and hire personnel and provide the equipment necessary for the collection, impoundment, care, handling, and disposal of stray, unlicensed, diseased, or vicious dogs.

(ii) The initial cost for the building and equipment under this paragraph may not exceed \$35,000.

(2) The county commissioners shall determine the number and salary of persons to be employed at the animal shelter.

(3) The county commissioners may enter into agreements with adjacent counties to establish an animal shelter to serve the counties.

(4) The county commissioners may contract with an animal welfare society, a humane society, or any other qualified person to:

(i) establish an animal shelter; or

(ii) seize, dispose of, or euthanize stray, injured, or sick dogs.

(5) Notwithstanding § 13-105(d) of this subtitle, the county commissioners may use proceeds from dog license fees to:

(i) establish an animal shelter; or

(ii) collect, dispose of, or euthanize stray, injured, or sick dogs.

(f) (1) The County Commissioners of Charles County, by rule, regulation, or resolution, may provide that an owner of a dog may not allow the dog, whether licensed or unlicensed, to run at large off the premises of the owner.

(2) A rule, regulation, or resolution passed under this subsection may allow the following dogs to run at large when accompanied by the owner or agent of the owner and when kept within sight or calling distance of the owner or agent:

(i) dogs proved to be obedient, in accordance with a regulation or resolution of the county;

(ii) dogs being used or trained for hunting; and

(iii) dogs accompanied by the owner on horseback.

(3) The county commissioners, by rule, regulation, or resolution, may provide for enforcement and investigation of reports of violations of a rule, regulation, or resolution passed under this subsection.

(4) An owner of a dog who fails to comply with a rule, regulation, or resolution passed under this subsection is guilty of a misdemeanor and on conviction is subject to a fine not exceeding \$25 for each violation.

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